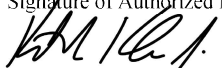


BROADBAND EXPANSION GRANT APPLICATION

For Fiscal Year 2022

Primary Applicant (Name and Address): BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company 1120 15th Avenue Bloomer, WI 54724	Applications MUST be UPLOADED to ERF via the Commission's website, http://psc.wi.gov/apps35/ERF_upload/content/mymenu.aspx . Refer to section 2.3 for detailed instructions. Applications are due and MUST be uploaded to ERF no later than: March 17, 2022 at 4:00pm (16:00) Central Time. Late applications will not be accepted.	
	Contact for further information: PSCStatebroadbandoffice@wisconsin.gov	
	Date: December 1, 2021	
<p>The Public Service Commission of Wisconsin is seeking applications for Broadband Expansion Grants. The Commission may award one or more grants during Fiscal Year 2022 to public and private entities that meet the eligibility requirements set forth in Wis. Stat. § 196.504. This grant round will be funded with bond proceeds authorized by the Wisconsin Building Commission pursuant to Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). As such, successful applicants are subject to the requirements of Wis. Stat. § 13.48(30). Successful applicants will demonstrate a clear and achievable plan to improve broadband communications services in one or more underserved areas in the State.</p> <p>Applicant Certification: In signing this application, the undersigned verifies under penalty of perjury that the Applicant and its employees and agents have not, either directly or indirectly, entered into any agreement or participated in any collusion or otherwise taken any action in restraint of free competition with respect to this application; that no attempt has been made to induce any other person or firm to submit or not to submit an application; that this application has been independently arrived at without collusion with any other proposer, competitor or potential competitor; that this application has not been knowingly disclosed prior to the opening of applications to any other applicant or competitor; that all of the responses and representations of Applicant in this application are true and correct to the best of the undersigned's knowledge, information, and belief; and that Applicant agrees to, accepts, and will comply with all of the terms and conditions respecting this application and any award of a broadband expansion grant as may be established in a grant award Agreement.</p>		
Name of Authorized Representative (Type or Print) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kent Klima; Travis McFarlane 	Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> VP and General Manager; Operations Manager 	Phone (715) 568 - 4830
Signature of Authorized Representative 	Date 03/15/2022	

SUMMARY OF GRANT APPLICATION

Primary Applicant Name BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company	Amount of Broadband Grant Request (round to nearest dollar) \$3,781,862
Federal Employer Identification No. 39-1904044	Amount of Matching Funds Pledged (round to nearest dollar) \$1,490,086
Contact Name and Title <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Kent Klima, VP and General Manager Travis McFarlane, Operations Manager 	Total Cost of Proposed Project (round to nearest dollar) \$5,271,948
Telephone Number (715) 568-4830	Project Name Bloomer Telephone Co./Townships of Hallie and Seymour
E-mail Address(es) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> kent.klima@bloomer.net travis.mcfarlane@bloomer.net 	Type of Proposed Broadband Service (FTTH, Cable, DSL, etc.) FTTH
Grant Manager, if different than Primary Applicant	Type of Proposed Project (Last-mile, Middle-Mile, backbone, other) Last Mile
Grant Manager Contact Name	Grant Manager Email Address and Telephone Number
If the application proposes a public-private partnership, list the names, addresses, and FEINs of the partner companies or organizations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Public-private Partnership with the Town of Hallie → FEIN: 39-6021363 Public-private Partnership with the Town of Seymour → FEIN: 39-6008092 Public-private Partnership with Chippewa County → FEIN: 39-6005678 Public-private Partnership with Eau Claire County → FEIN: 39-6005694 	
Brief Project Description (2 sentences) BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company, the Towns of Hallie and Seymour, Chippewa County, and Eau Claire County partner to bring fiber-to-the-home services to Hallie and Seymour and its surrounding rural area. The proposed project will construct 112 miles of fiber to provide symmetrical download and upload speeds of 2.5 Gbps and faster to 520 unserved and underserved locations.	
Maximum Proposed Download Transmission Speed 2.5 Gbps (scalable to be faster)	Maximum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed 2.5 Gbps (scalable to be faster)
Minimum Proposed Download Speed to Customer Location 100 Mbps	Minimum Proposed Upload Transmission Speed to Customer Location 100 Mbps
County or Counties served by this project Chippewa County and Eau Claire County	Community or Communities served by this project Hallie and Seymour

List of the broadband service providers, if any, currently serving the area the applicant proposes to serve	
AT&T, CenturyLink, Charter/Spectrum	
Does proposed project serve an <i>unserved</i> area of the State, as defined in Section 1.4 of the application instruction? (yes/no) Yes	Is the Applicant certified as a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community, or does the grant project propose to serve a Broadband Forward! Community or Telecommuter Forward! Community? (yes/no) Yes
For last mile projects or component the expected number of Business Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total business locations passed or with new service access). 14	For last mile projects or components the expected number of Residential Locations that will have access to the improved broadband service (i.e., total residential locations passed or with new service access). 506
Of the improved business locations, how many locations are <i>unserved</i> ? 0	Of the improved residential locations, how many are <i>unserved</i> ? 39
For providers that are eligible telecommunications carriers will the proposed broadband service be available to Lifeline customers? (yes/no) No	Are there any programs available for low-income households to access low-cost service or discounts? (yes/no) Yes
Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Emergency Broadband Benefit Program? (yes/no) Yes (Affordable Connectivity Program)	Is the internet service provider currently participating in the Department of Public Instruction and CESA purchasing's Digital Learning Bridge? (yes/no) Yes
Did the internet service provider participate in the Public Service Commission's voluntary Broadband Coverage Data Collection in 2021? (yes/no) Yes	

FY22 Broadband Expansion Grant Application

Budget & Income Summary

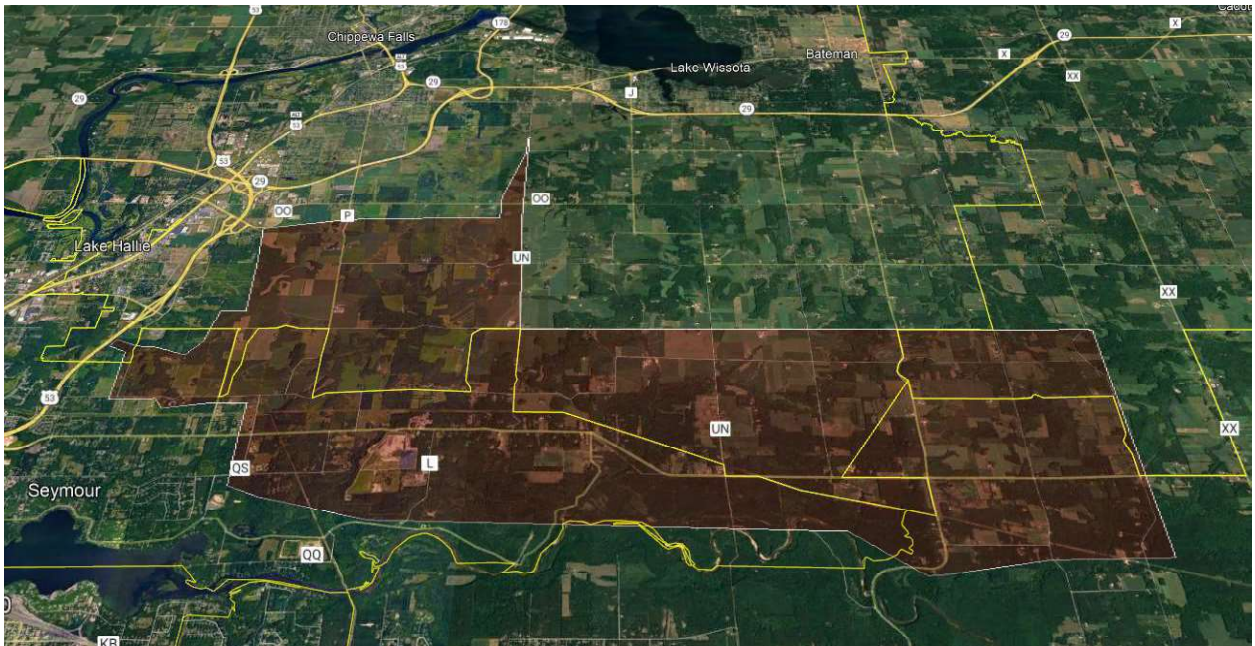


Please complete this form using Microsoft Excel. A PDF copy must be attached to your application as page four. In addition, this form must also be uploaded to ERF in Excel format.

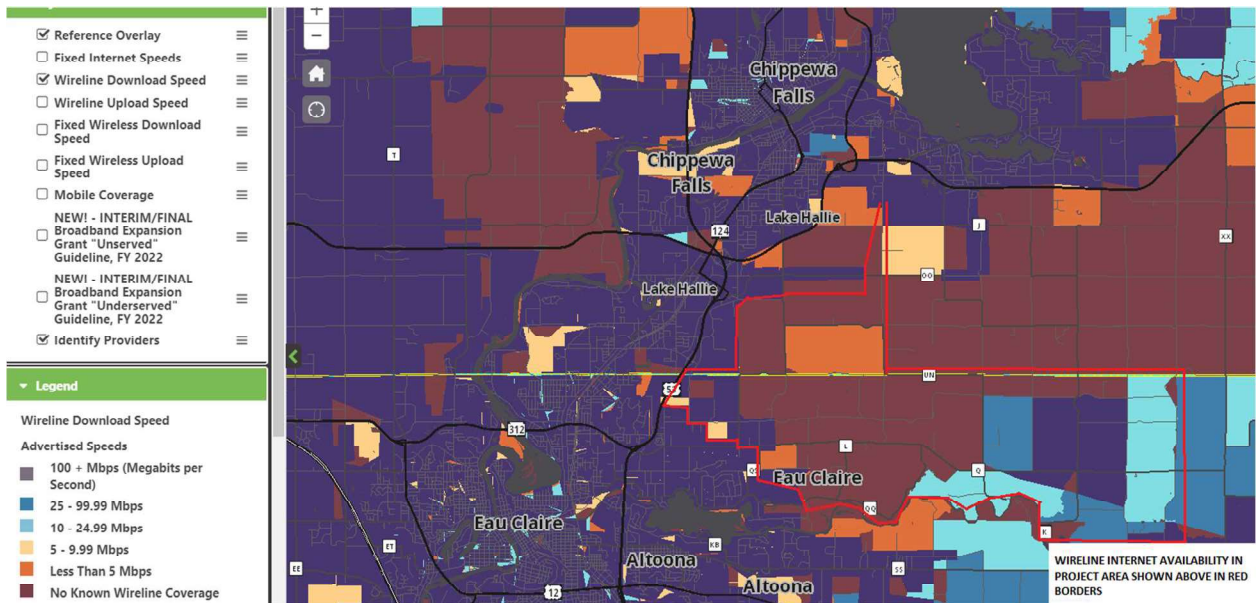
Grant Summary				
Grant Applicant:		Project:		
BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company		Bloomer Telephone Co./Townships of Hallie and Seymour		
Budget				
Line :	Description / Category:	Grant Funds:	Match:	Total:
1	Contractual, Consultant Fees	\$ 3,460,770	\$ 1,361,462	\$ 4,822,232
2	Equipment	\$ 264,329	\$ 106,309	\$ 370,638
3	Supplies			\$ -
4	Labor (Salary, Fringe)	\$ 56,764	\$ 22,315	\$ 79,079
5	Permitting, Licensing Fees			\$ -
6	Travel			\$ -
7	Other			\$ -
Total:		\$ 3,781,862	\$ 1,490,086	\$ 5,271,948
		28.3% match requested		
Pledged Contributions				
#:	Entity:	Entity Type:	Pledge Type:	Pledge:
1	BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company	Applicant	Cash	\$ 780,000.00
2	Town of Seymour	Partner	Cash	\$ 325,000.00
3	Town of Hallie	Partner	Cash	\$ 14,000.00
4	Eau Claire County	Partner	Cash	\$ 325,000.00
5	Chippewa County	Partner	Cash	\$ 33,586.00
6	Marshfield Clinic	Other	Cash	\$ 10,000.00
7	Eau Claire Energy	Other	Cash	\$ 2,500.00
8				
9				
10				
Total:				\$1,490,086

Map(s)

Proposed Project Area



Wireline Availability in the Proposed Project Area



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Executive Summary

BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company is proposing a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) project to serve 520 locations with broadband internet service with 2.5 gigabit speeds in Chippewa County and Eau Claire County, Wisconsin, and in the Towns of Hallie and Seymour. Public-private partnerships have been developed between Bloomer Telephone Company and Chippewa County, Eau Claire County, the Town Board of Hallie, and the Town Board of Seymour. Funding support also has been provided by Marshfield Clinic and Eau Claire Energy Cooperative. Together, we are asking the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (the Commission) for \$3,781,862 (71.7 percent) through the Fiscal Year 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant to match the partnership's \$1,490,086 contribution.

Bloomer Telephone Company carefully mapped the proposed project area based on the Commission's State Broadband Eligibility Grant Map. For areas marked as served by the map, Bloomer Telephone Company contacted each wireline and wireless service provider listed on the Commission's map for the addresses in the proposed project area that lie outside areas designated "underserved" and "unserved." The proposed project area is completely underserved, with only one provider of qualifying broadband services in less than 2 percent of locations: Spectrum. The remainder of the area is almost entirely unserved by wireline providers, and the fixed wireless providers that are available are incapable of providing advertised speeds per their terms and conditions.

Bloomer Telephone Company is proposing to provide 2.5 Gbps symmetrical FTTH broadband internet services at affordable, competitive rates to the 520 locations in the proposed project area in rural eastern parts of the Town of Hallie and the Town of Seymour. Bloomer Telephone Company anticipates 364 total subscribers from the project, or a penetration rate of 70 percent. The locations are mainly households and farms, with a little over a dozen commercial locations and some residences likely serving as home offices for those who telework or those who run a small business out of their homes. Bloomer Telephone Company's service offerings in the proposed project area will include a low-cost option, and the Company will participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program.

Access to FTTH services would improve economic and health outcomes in the proposed project area by increasing access to distance learning and remote work opportunities. For students in the proposed project area, a better internet connection with strong upload speeds enables them to be seen and heard clearly in the virtual classroom. For farmers in the proposed project area, FTTH services enable the use of precision agriculture, which benefits both crop and livestock production through increasing sustainability, refining resource allocation, and improving operational efficiency. FTTH access not only benefits current residents, but it attracts prospective residents as well. Increased interest in an area raises property values, furthering opportunities for additional investment in the community.

No adverse effect on any current or potential provider in the surrounding area will result from the project, which will bring affordable, high-quality, and high-speed broadband service to an area that desperately needs it.

Mandatory Application Requirements

Applicant Identification and Contact Information

Entity Contact Information

Name of Entity: BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company
Mailing Address: 1120 15th Avenue, Bloomer, WI 54724
Telephone Number: 715-568-4830
Contact: Kent Klima, Vice President & General Manager
Email: kent.klima@bloomer.net

Contact Information for Public-private Partnership Members

Name of Entity: Chippewa County
Mailing Address: 711 N. Bridge Street, Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
Telephone Number: 715-720-0810
Contact: Dean Gullickson, Chair, Chippewa County Board of Supervisors
Email: dgullickson@co.chippewa.wi.us

Name of Entity: Eau Claire County
Mailing Address: 721 Oxford Avenue, Eau Claire, WI 54703
Telephone Number: 715-839-4835
Contact: Nick Smiar, Chair, Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors
Email: nick.smiar@co.eau-claire.wi.us

Name of Entity: Town of Hallie
Mailing Address: 13034 30th Ave. Chippewa Falls, WI 54729
Telephone Number: 715-720-0810
Contact: Larry Marquardt, Chair, Hallie Town Board
Email: townofhallie@gmail.com

Name of Entity: Town of Seymour
Mailing Address: 6500 Tower Dr, Eau Claire, WI 54703
Telephone Number: 715-834-4999
Contact: Jessica Janssen, Chair, Seymour Town Board
Email: seymourchair@gmail.com

Demonstrating Partnership Eligibility

BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company is the subsidiary of an incumbent local exchange carrier that is certified to provide telecommunications services in the State of Wisconsin pursuant to Section 196.5(2)(b) of the Wisconsin State Statutes, with non-exclusive statewide operating authority. Bloomer Telephone Company (PSCW Utility #590) currently serves the Bloomer exchange of Wisconsin in NECA Study Area #330850.

Bloomer Telephone Company currently provides over 2,732 broadband internet subscribers in the City of Bloomer and the surrounding area with up to 1 Gbps symmetrical service using the Company's state-of-the-art fiber-to-the-home Network. Bloomer Telephone Company also provides telephone service to 2,296 subscribers and video services to over 1,154 subscribers using the same network.

Description of the Project

Description of the Proposed Project Area

BTC Communications dba Bloomer Telephone Company is proposing a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) project to serve 520 locations with broadband internet service with 2.5 gigabit speeds in Chippewa County and Eau Claire County, Wisconsin, in the Town of Hallie and the Town of Seymour. Bloomer Telephone Company will construct 112 miles of fiber across 28.6 square miles in the proposed project area. Public-private partnerships have been developed between Bloomer Telephone Company and Chippewa County, Eau Claire County, the Town of Hallie, and the Town of Seymour. Funding support also has been provided by Marshfield Clinic and Eau Claire Energy Cooperative. Together, we are asking the Wisconsin Public Service Commission (the Commission) for \$3,781,862 (71.7 percent) through the Fiscal Year 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant to match the partnership's \$1,490,086 contribution.

The population of the Town of Hallie is 166 and the population of the Town of Seymour is 3,455. 37,349 people live in Chippewa County and 104,646 people live in Eau Claire County, according to the latest U.S. Census Bureau data. Data from the National Center for Education Statistics shows the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District serves 4,844 students, the School District of Fall Creek serves 820 students, and the Eau Claire County School District serves 11,008 students. Many of these students reside in the proposed project area. In letters of support from Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District and the School District of Fall Creek, which can be found in Appendix I of this application, administrators describe how students residing in the rural parts of the districts, like those in the proposed project area, lack access to high-speed internet services and are being left behind.

To provide these students and their neighbors access to affordable, reliable, high-speed broadband internet, Bloomer Telephone Company has partnered with the towns and counties served by the project. Awarding Broadband Expansion Grant funds for the proposed project would enable the following outcomes:

- Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District and the School District of Fall Creek would be able to fully take advantage of their one-laptop-per-student initiatives;
- the Town of Hallie and the Town of Seymour would receive much-needed economic investment, resulting in higher home values;
- government buildings would have high-speed internet access for the first time;
- residents in the proposed project area would have access to many work-from-home employment opportunities;

- the businesses, community centers, and farms in the proposed project area would benefit from access to digital marketplaces, increased marketing potential, and more reliable service to process transactions;
- the resiliency of the local electric power grid would be enhanced, further funding partner Eau Claire Energy Cooperative's efforts to implement SmartGrid technology; and
- the well-being of residents in the proposed project area would improve through access to telemedicine.

Documentation Demonstrating Broadband Availability in the Proposed Project Area

Bloomer Telephone Company designed its proposed project area using the Commission's State Broadband Eligibility Grant Map and selected several areas primarily designated as underserved. However, through information received from residents, technical knowledge of available services, and research performed to evaluate broadband availability, Bloomer Telephone Company believes that the Commission's map contains inaccurate information regarding the availability of broadband services in the proposed project area.

Bloomer Telephone Company identified 21 addresses in its proposed project area that were designated as served by the Commission's map. All other identifiable addresses were marked as either "underserved" or "unserved." As evidenced in Appendix IV of this application, Bloomer Telephone Company used these addresses to contact Charter/Spectrum, AT&T, T-Mobile, Astrea, and US Cellular regarding the availability of wireline and wireless internet. Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile / Sprint were contacted regarding the availability of home mobile internet services as well. A list of addresses used, providers contacted, and providers available in this portion of the proposed project area is included in Appendix II of this application. Many of the locations researched did not have access to any wireline or wireless provider and were served by satellite technology. The nine other locations were served by Charter / Spectrum's cable modem DOCSIS 3.1 technology.

Partner Eau Claire County's Broadband Committee has also conducted a speed test survey and received 83 responses from residents in the proposed project area. Download speeds for responders averaged 3.4 Mbps, and upload speeds averaged 500 Kbps. Selected responses from residents regarding the need for high-speed internet has been included as Appendix V of this application.

Explanation of how Proposed Project will Increase Broadband Access

Bloomer Telephone Company's proposed project will serve 481 underserved locations and 39 unserved locations with fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) high-speed internet access in an area where no fiber-based broadband is available for end users. As previously stated and evidenced throughout the application, the proposed project area largely lacks wireline service. FTTH offers faster, more reliable access to services that are not limited by aging copper facilities or a satellite connection. Modern cable modem technology can offer significant download speeds, but the technology struggles to provide upload speeds greater than 35 Mbps. Using initially deployed customer premise equipment and a direct, in-home network connection, Bloomer Telephone

Company will provide residential and business customers starting at speeds of 100 Mbps download and 100 Mbps upload and reaching (and eventually surpassing) 2.5 Gbps download and 2.5 Gbps upload.

Any improvement to a competitor's existing network would simply use a fiber-to-the-node architecture to feed a legacy copper plant to the customer premise, technology that is not scalable to future demand. FTTH technology, alternatively, is scalable to speeds of 10 Gbps and faster. Advertised available download speeds in the proposed project area from Charter/Spectrum (in the 9 areas identified as having coverage) range from 200 Mbps to 940 Mbps, with upload speeds approaching 35 Mbps in the fastest package. In these 9 areas, Charter/Spectrum is the only provider of wireline or wireless services. As such, they should be considered "underserved." The vast majority of the rest of the proposed project area is completely unserved by wireline. Fixed wireless service available from AT&T advertises speeds up to 25 Mbps download, but their terms and conditions reveal that actual speeds are closer 10 Mbps by 1 Mbps.

Statement Regarding Last-Mile Aspect of the Proposed Project

Bloomer Telephone Company's proposed project includes only distribution and last-mile fiber facilities. The project is an extension of Bloomer's existing fiber network, with dedicated backbone, distribution, feeder, and drop fiber to customer premises. No middle mile infrastructure or costs are included in this grant application. Bloomer Telephone Company currently maintains sufficient middle mile and backhaul facilities, and it has capacity on its existing backbone ring network to deliver high-speed broadband services to all proposed and future last-mile subscribers in the proposed project area.

Description of the Broadband Service to be Provided

Bloomer Telephone Company will provide high-speed wireline broadband service using a FTTH network design. The proposed network will be an extension of the fiber network currently in place and used in Bloomer Telephone Company's existing service territory. Bloomer Telephone Company will deploy an XGS-PON 10 Gigabits Symmetrical Passive Optical Network (PON). Bandwidth in an XGS-PON network is comprised of 10 Gbps downstream and 10 Gbps upstream, thus symmetrical bandwidths. The bandwidth is shared by all subscribers connected to the PON via a passive optical splitter. Dynamic bandwidth allocation and statistical multiplexing enable more effective bandwidth usage, allowing users higher effective throughput when needed.

The PON architecture is designed for straightforward upgrade to even higher bandwidth PON architectures, using different wavelengths for multiple 10 Gbps signals or even higher bandwidths in the future, without changing out any of the physical infrastructure other than the electronics (laser transmitters and receivers) at the nodes and Optical Network Terminals (ONTs) at the customer premises for those customers who want the especially high bandwidth. Existing PON FTTH subscribers can remain at the deployed system bandwidth or upgrade with no changes to the existing optical fiber PON, other than possibly the insertion of specialty optical isolators at the node that provision for more wavelengths, if needed.

Upon completion of the proposed project, the following service packages will be available:

Residential & Business Service Offerings		
Download Speeds	Upload Speeds	Monthly Price
100 Mbps	100 Mbps	\$49.95
250 Mbps	250 Mbps	\$79.95
500 Mbps	250 Mbps	\$129.95
1 Gbps	250 Mbps	\$199.95

As previously stated, speeds greater than those listed are possible with the network architecture Bloomer Telephone Company will implement in the proposed project area, with pricing and service packages yet to be established.

To facilitate e-learning opportunities, improve access to telemedicine and work-from-home employment, and help the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District and the School District of Fall Creek take advantage of their 1:1 laptop to student ratio, Bloomer Telephone Company will offer service packages with symmetrical speeds, in addition to a 100 Mbps symmetrical low-cost option that becomes less than \$20 per month when the subscriber is a participant in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP) and receives the program's \$30 a month discount.

When compared to the Federal Communications Commission's 2022 Broadband Reasonable Comparability Benchmark Calculator, the affordability of Bloomer Telephone Company's rates becomes clear. The US Benchmark Rate for 100 Mbps symmetrical is \$96.47 per month, over 93 percent more expensive than Bloomer Telephone Company's monthly rate for the same service. For 250 Mbps symmetrical, the US Benchmark Rate is \$110.53, over 38 percent more expensive than the proposed project's rates.

Voice-over-Internet-Protocol (VoIP) services and video services will be available for subscribers upon request as an optional service.

Proposed Project Schedule

If Bloomer Telephone Company's application is approved by the Commission by the end of August 2022, the following deployment schedule will be used to complete the proposed project:

- September – April of 2022 → Order and stage equipment
- May 2023 – July of 2024 → Bury new fiber facilities
- July 2023 – Decof 2023 → Install electronics
- December of 2023 → Begin services

Itemized Budget

Appendix III and the itemized cost list below summarizes the equipment costs for the proposed network. All construction and installation costs will be managed by Bloomer Telephone Company. The company will use internal employees and trusted third party contractors that the company has successfully used in similar fiber construction projects. The proposed network infrastructure will be owned by Bloomer Telephone Company.

Bloomer Telephone Company's application complies with all budgetary and financial requirements under the FY 2022 Broadband Expansion Grant program. Grant funds requested in this application will only be used for authorized services. Ongoing expenses or monthly bills of telecommunications subscribers will not be subsidized with grant funds. Bloomer Telephone Company affirms that all grant funds requested in this application will be used for the sole purpose of constructing broadband infrastructure in the underserved proposed project area.

Budget Detail		
Description / Category		
	Detail	Total
Contractual, Consultant Fees		\$ 4,822,231
*Buried fiber network of 112miles of 12 to 288 fiber strand cable, including splicing, pedestals, handholes and equipment & engineering costs		
Equipment-detail below		\$ 370,638
*Equipment shelter, cabinets, vaults, power, splitters, fiber panels	\$ 215,588	
*XGS-PON shelf, blade, sfps	\$ 83,202	
*ONT'S	\$ 69,453	
Labor (Salary, Fringe)		\$ 79,079
Total:		\$ 5,271,948

Priority Factors Supporting the Application

Matching Funds

The financial contributions of the Town of Hallie, the Town of Seymour, Chippewa County, Eau Claire County, Marshfield Clinic, Eau Claire Energy Coop and Bloomer Telephone Company amount to \$1,490,086, or 28.3 percent of the \$5,271,948 project. The Town of Hallie will provide \$14,000, the Town of Seymour will provide \$325,000, Chippewa County will provide \$33,586, Eau Claire County will provide \$325,000, and Bloomer Telephone Company will provide \$780,000 in matching funds. In addition, the Marshfield Clinic Health System has

pledged \$10,000 to the project, and Eau Claire Energy has pledged \$2,500. Hallie and Seymour are also making in-kind contributions to the proposed project in the form of waiving all the normal fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from the Town Board.

Public-private Partnerships

Bloomer Telephone's public-private partnerships demonstrate the level of community support the company has garnered for the project. The partnerships were developed in collaboration with the Eau Claire County Board of Supervisors, the Chippewa County Board of Supervisors, the Town Board of Hallie, and the Town Board of Seymour, who have both pledged to support the project through providing financial assistance, granting permission on and across property to construct the proposed project, and prioritizing the project in internal planning documents. The Town of Seymour and Eau Claire County are certified Broadband Forward! Communities because of their commitment to bringing high-speed internet access to their residents. In addition, the Town of Seymour is a Telecommuter Forward! Community due to their commitment to promoting telework opportunities to their residents. Public-private partnership agreements have been included with this application in Appendix IV. Commitment letters from partners have been included in Appendix I.

Existing Broadband Service

Bloomer Telephone Company designed its proposed project area using the Commission's Broadband Availability Map and selected several areas primarily designated as underserved. However, through information received from residents, technical knowledge of available services, and research performed to evaluate broadband availability, Bloomer Telephone Company believes that the Commission's map contains inaccurate information regarding the availability of broadband services in the proposed project area.

Evidenced in Appendix IV of this application, Bloomer Telephone Company used 21 different addresses designated as served by the Commission's map and contacted Charter/Spectrum, AT&T, T-Mobile, Astrea, and US Cellular regarding the availability of wireline and wireless internet. Verizon, AT&T, and T-Mobile / Sprint were contacted regarding the availability of home mobile internet services as well. Only 9 addresses were served by Charter / Spectrum. Advertised speeds at these locations ranged from 200 Mbps download and 10 Mbps upload to 940 Mbps download and 35 Mbps upload. A spreadsheet of addresses used, providers contacted, and providers available in this portion of the proposed project area has been included in Appendix IV of this application.

Advertised available download speeds in the proposed project area from Charter/Spectrum (in the 9 areas identified as having coverage) range from 200 Mbps to 940 Mbps, with upload speeds approaching 35 Mbps in the fastest package. In these 9 areas, Charter/Spectrum is the only provider of wireline or wireless services. As such, they should be considered "underserved." The vast majority of the rest of the proposed project area is completely unserved by wireline.

Fixed wireless service available from AT&T advertises speeds up to 25 Mbps download, but their terms and conditions reveal that actual speeds are closer 10 Mbps by 1 Mbps. FTTH technology is scalable to speeds of 10 Gbps and faster.

Bloomer Telephone Company's application avoids duplicating existing broadband infrastructure as no FTTH services exist in the proposed project area. The vast majority of locations in the proposed project area are only served by satellite providers.

Project Impact

Bloomer Telephone is proposing to provide 2.5 Gbps symmetrical fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) broadband internet services at affordable, competitive rates to the 520 locations in the proposed project area in rural parts of Chippewa County and Eau Claire County in the Town of Hallie and the Town of Seymour, Wisconsin. Bloomer Telephone Company anticipates 364 total subscribers from the project, or a penetration rate of 70 percent. This take rate is based on the rate of subscribers Bloomer Telephone Company has received on previous FTTH projects and on its efforts to recruit potential subscribers that have demonstrated interest in the company's services with door-to-door campaigns, mailers, and phone calls.

Bloomer Telephone Company's proposed project area lies in an isolated, rural area, beginning just east of State Highway 53 and North 50th Avenue and extending eastward to North 150th Avenue. The terrain features evergreen, deciduous, and mixed forests, herbaceous and woody wetlands, grasslands, and developed residential areas. Data from the United States Department of Agriculture's CroplandCROS map indicates many farms exist in the proposed project area. These farms grow alfalfa, beans, corn, livestock, oats, rye, and soybeans.

To serve the proposed project area, Bloomer Telephone Company will provide high-speed wireline broadband service using a FTTH network design. Service packages will include: 100 Mbps symmetrical for \$49.95 per month, 250 Mbps symmetrical for \$79.95 per month, 500 Mbps x 250 Mbps for \$129.95 per month, 1 Gbps by 250 Mbps for \$199.95 per month, (symmetrical upgrade available) and 2.5 Gbps symmetrical for a to-be-determined price. Speeds greater than those listed are possible with the network architecture Bloomer Telephone Company will implement in the proposed project area. Pricing for these service packages have yet to be established.

For low-income individuals and families, Bloomer Telephone Company will participate in the Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), which will provide up to \$30 per month in discounts for broadband internet services. With that discount, Bloomer Telephone Company's low-cost 100 Mbps symmetrical service offering becomes \$19.95 per month. ACP discounts will be offered to every subscriber in the proposed project area, and instructions on how to apply will be added to Bloomer Telephone Company's website.

Scalability

Bloomer Telephone's proposed project will offer the same FTTH services it offers in its current service area while increasing the number of users the Company serves by 364 customers, or 13 percent. The proposed project will add 2 nodes to the Company's network, serving 28.6 square miles.

The proposed project will deploy an XGS-PON 10 Gigabits Symmetrical Passive Optical Network (PON). Bandwidth in an XGS-PON network is comprised of 10 Gbps downstream and 10 Gbps upstream, thus symmetrical bandwidths. The bandwidth is shared by all subscribers connected to the PON via a passive optical splitter. Dynamic bandwidth allocation and statistical multiplexing enable more effective bandwidth usage, allowing users higher effective throughput when needed.

The PON architecture is designed for straightforward upgrade to even higher bandwidth PON architectures, using different wavelengths for multiple 10 Gbps signals or even higher bandwidths in the future, without changing out any of the physical infrastructure other than the electronics (laser transmitters and receivers) at the nodes and Optical Network Terminals (ONTs) at the customer premises for those customers who want the especially high bandwidth. Existing PON FTTH subscribers can remain at the deployed system bandwidth or upgrade with no changes to the existing optical fiber PON, other than possibly the insertion of specialty optical isolators at the node that provision for more wavelengths, if needed.

The proposed project is intended to grow to ultimately accommodate all future residential and business in the proposed project area. The project will initially deploy ultrafast broadband services over fiber facilities suitable for broadband at practically unlimited speeds, well in excess of the state's threshold of 25 Mbps / 3 Mbps. Expansion and improvement of services over time will include:

- Installing battery backup power, upon request, when voice services are provided and complying with all future state and federal requirements regarding battery replacement;
- Adhering to mandated increases in the speed and latency requirements of broadband services; and
- Participating in the Federal Communications Commissions' Affordable Connectivity Program to provide low-income customers with a discount on broadband services.

The impact on educational attainment in the proposed project area is expected to help retain talented students and employees, leading to a larger tax base and additional job opportunities.

Bloomer Telephone Company is committed to bringing FTTH services to rural Wisconsin. Multi-phase projects to Bloomer and Colfax have been completed, and expansion efforts in other areas are still underway. Bloomer Telephone Company will continue to expand its network with the Commission's support.

Economic Development

A fiber-to-the-home connection creates significant potential for economic development, particularly in rural, sparsely populated areas. Like a telephone connection 70 years ago, access to the latest communication technology provides opportunity for commerce, education, and access to vital services like healthcare. Bloomer Telephone Company's proposed project will provide 520 locations with access to FTTH services, improving economic, educational, and health outcomes in the proposed project area. By increasing access to distance learning, remote work opportunities, and telemedicine, the proposed project will have a strong, positive effect on the local economy. As identified in the letters of support provided in Appendix II of this application, high-speed internet is desperately needed in the proposed project area, particularly to support video conferencing technology.

Fiber's high speeds and reliable connection will enable children and adults alike to easily take advantage of distance learning opportunities, which is vital to economic development. Investing in educational opportunities ensures prosperity for future generations through a skilled, diversified workforce. High upload speeds made possible with a FTTH connection will enable individuals in the proposed project area to attend and participate in virtual classes offered at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire and at Chippewa Valley Technical College. For students in the proposed project area that attend a school in the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District or in the School District of Fall Creek, a reliable connection will enable rural students to use the laptops they have been provided to their full potential. FTTH service will allow students to complete their homework without fear of an interrupted or slowed network connection and will enable them to be seen and heard when using video conferencing.

Many individuals in the proposed project area work in the information, finance, and health insurance industries and could perform their job functions from home. With this type of client-focused work, video conferencing is a frequent part of conducting business. Like with distance learning, high upload speeds are necessary to adequately participate in a video conference meeting. Current levels of service available in the proposed project area leave residents with slow upload speeds and little choice in internet service provider, with many using mobile hotspot technology to access the internet via their cellular device. This type of service quickly becomes prohibitively expensive. With an affordable FTTH connection, telecommuting becomes more feasible, which in turn makes homes in the proposed project area more valuable.

Affordable, high-speed internet access not only benefits current residents, but it attracts potential residents as well. With increased interest in an area comes higher real estate values, larger property taxes, and more opportunities for further community investment. Researchers from the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater found that access to gigabit internet services like the proposed project increase the value of a home by thousands of dollars, equivalent to the addition of a fireplace or approximately half the value of adding a bathroom. Studies from the University of Colorado and Carnegie Mellon University have confirmed these findings. (The Wall Street Journal, *How Fast Internet Affects Home Prices*, Ryan Knutson (June 2015).

<https://web.archive.org/web/20201021095911/https://www.wsj.com/articles/how-fast-internet-affects-home-pricesfast-internet-access-can-boost-a-homes-value-1435694077?tesla=y>).

Effect on Broadband Service to Adjacent Areas

Bloomer Telephone Company's proposed project will increase competition in an underserved area by providing 2.5 Gbps to areas that have access to only one provider of digital subscriber line (DSL) service. Fixed wireless services from AT&T advertises speeds up to 25 Mbps download, but their terms and conditions and their reports to the Federal Communications Commission and the Wisconsin Public Services Commission reveal that the network is only capable of 10 Mbps download. No adverse effect on any current or potential provider in the surrounding area will result from the project, which will bring affordable, high-quality, and high-speed broadband service to an area that desperately needs it.

Other Information Supporting the Application

History of Broadband Construction Projects

Bloomer Telephone Company has served the Bloomer area since 1901 and has provided high-speed internet services since 1996. In 2006, Bloomer Telephone Company began a fiber-to-the-home (FTTH) project in its incumbent-local-exchange (ILEC) area. By 2017, 100 percent of customers in the ILEC area were using this FTTH service. Bloomer Telephone Company now serves 2,732 locations with FTTH and continues to extend their fiber network to rural customers in the surrounding communities.

Between 2018 and 2022, Bloomer Telephone Company has applied and secured grant funding for six separate Broadband Expansion Grants through the Commission to provide FTTH services. They include a \$2.49 million project to serve 205 locations in the Town of Eagle Point, a \$1.26 million project to serve 100 locations in the Town of Tilden, a \$1.25 million to serve 227 locations in the Town of Colfax (phase one), a \$1.90 million project to serve 475 locations in the Town of Colfax (phase two), a \$718K project to serve 113 locations in Bloomer School District (phase one), and a \$1.33 million project to serve 255 locations in Bloomer School District (phase two). These projects have had a take rate of approximately 75 percent.

Statement Regarding Proposed Project and Duplicative Infrastructure

Bloomer Telephone Company's proposed project does not duplicate existing broadband infrastructure. Residents in the proposed project areas uniformly say they have no access to fast broadband from their incumbent provider. It is Bloomer Telephone Company's belief that these locations are at the edge of the incumbent provider's exchange and that advertised speeds do not match possible speeds.

Financial Ability to Undertake the Proposed Project

Bloomer Telephone Company has demonstrated its financial preparedness and operational skills through the completion of four of the Commission's Broadband Expansion Grant awards and has won two other expansion grant awards that begin construction this year. The company has offered state-of-the-art telecommunications services since operations began in 1901. Bloomer Telephone Company's success in completing and surpassing adoption targets on its Broadband Expansion Grant awards provides additional proof of the Company's strong financial and operational capabilities. All revenues have been reported to the Commission under the Annual Questionnaire for Telecommunications Utilities that describes regulated and non-regulated revenues.

Impact of Proposed Project on Access to Telemedicine

Access to telemedicine would greatly improve public health outcomes in the proposed project area. Residents in these areas need access to high speeds for video conferencing to see the doctor as easily as someone who lives in the city. For elderly residents especially, transportation over such distances can be quite difficult. At-home virtual visits lessen the strain on patients and those who care for them. More virtual healthcare appointments means less people visiting hospitals and healthcare facilities in person, reducing the spread of disease and easing the strain on the facility's resources. Telemedicine services in Eau Claire from Privea, Mayo Clinic, Marshfield Clinic, and St. Joseph / Sacred Heart will be readily available over the proposed network. This is an important feature of high-speed internet for many subscribers in the communities Bloomer Telephone Company serves. In recognition of the need for telemedicine in the proposed project area, Marshfield Clinic has agreed to contribute \$10,000 to the project. Many hospital and clinic staff that reside in the proposed project area could use a high-speed internet connection to follow up with patients via video conferencing while they work from home.

Impact of Proposed Project on Access to Educational Opportunities from Home

As evidenced by the letters of support provided to Bloomer Telephone Company in support of this application, children in rural parts of Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District and the School District of Fall Creek, like the proposed project area, lack access to distance learning opportunities and are being left behind. Access to high speeds and reliable connection will enable children and adults alike to easily take advantage of distance learning opportunities in the proposed project area and complete their homework at home. High upload speeds made possible with a FTTH connection will enable students to attend and participate in virtual classes, including those offered at the Chippewa Valley Technical College in nearby Chippewa Falls or at the University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. For students in the proposed project area that attend a school in Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District, School District of Fall Creek, or Eau Claire School District a reliable connection will enable full use of the devices the students have

been provided. The services Bloomer Telephone Company will provide will allow students to complete their homework without fear of an interrupted or slowed network connection.

Other Equitable Factors

Bloomer Telephone Company has provided services for over 100 years. During that time, it has developed relationships with equipment providers, local construction crews, consultants, and providers of capital. To demonstrate the relationships Bloomer Telephone Company has developed in the community, letters of support for the proposed project have been collected and included in full in Appendix I. These letters detail the immense need for high-speed internet in the proposed project area, and describe potential benefits to educational attainment, economic development, and public health in the community. Bloomer Telephone Company's proposed project will allow children to learn at home in the same way as their urban counterparts, increase home values, make telemedicine a reality for many, and increase the area's attractiveness to new residents and businesses.

Bloomer Telephone Company is committed to supporting broadband adoption and does so through door-to-door campaigns to sign residents up for affordable high-speed internet. For subscribers, the Company provides top-notch technical support from local experts and maintains a resource library detailing troubleshooting options for connecting to and using the internet. During the height of the COVID-19 pandemic, Bloomer Telephone Company also provided free hotspots to the community and partnered with the Bloomer School District to bring its students fast, affordable internet to support distance learning efforts.

Bloomer Telephone Company and its partners on the proposed project are deeply involved with bringing broadband to rural Wisconsin. The Town of Seymour is a Telecommuter Forward! community, and Eau Claire County is a Broadband Forward! community. With the Commission's support, this project can enact real change for the people of Hallie and Seymour.

Appendix

- Appendix I – Letters of Support
- Appendix II – Itemized Budget and Construction Costs
- Appendix III – Broadband Availability in the Proposed Project Area
- Appendix IV – Speed Test Data Broadband Availability in the Proposed Project Area
- Appendix V – Public-private Partnership Agreements

Appendix I – Letters of Support



STATE REPRESENTATIVE

JESSE JAMES

March 10th, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker, Secretary to the Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Secretary Coker,

I am writing to you today to support the Bloomer Telephone Company in their bid for the State of WI FY2022 Broadband Expansion Grant. Access to the internet opens doors for communities in many ways. It allows them to offer distance learning, telemedicine, and multi-participant interactive programming, among so many other things.

Many residents in more rural communities lack the necessary access to broadband and it puts them at disadvantage to compete with those around them. Access to the internet will assist this area immensely. This is a key area within the state that lacks this service, which is a service needed in a 21st century world. This grant and subsequent broadband service in the area would help those in school and those working from home, especially following the events of this pandemic. It would also give this area opportunity to grow and expand on what types of business can operate in the area.

This is an incredible opportunity and a wise investment for the rural residents of the townships of Hallie, Lafayette, and Seymour and Eau Claire and Chippewa County, and the overall State of Wisconsin. Thank you for considering the Bloomer Telephone Company for the State of WI FY2022 Broadband Expansion Grant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Jesse L. James".

Jesse L. James
State Representative
68th Assembly District

TOWN OF SEYMOUR
6500 TOWER DRIVE
EAU CLAIRE, WISCONSIN 54703
715.834.4999 Office; 715.834.3687 Fax
www.townofseymour.org

March 10, 2022

As Chair for the Town of Seymour, I submit this letter of support on behalf of roughly 1500 residents, nearly half of our township, who are either unserved or underserved by broadband capabilities. These are not new issues brought on by the recent pandemic, but instead a long-standing roadblock in our community that has hindered residential and business development, handicapped our ability to provide strong governmental support, and limited options for work and education for our town residents.

Town Hall Services

Our town clerk serves our residents during regular daily office hours at our Town Hall, located at 6500 Tower Dr., just three miles off a major bypass running through the City of Eau Claire. The town currently uses AT&T DSL services, which have continued to increase in price and decline in stability. One recent bill was over \$400, yet our speed tests show 2.56 download/.39 upload speeds, which are in line with an unserved area. Our clerk waits in excess of 5 minutes at times just for an email to open or an internet site to load. As a polling location, having stable and adequate internet is essential to fulfilling our governmental role. Our poll workers typically use their cell phones to verify voter registration because we cannot handle the traffic on voting day while using our current internet. We need to do better than this.

Community

Adjacent to the town hall are community ball fields that see upwards of 2500+ people per weekend from April - October for games and tournaments. Currently, there is no public internet available, but with broadband, our town would provide wireless internet capabilities for public access. This would enhance this public park and community space tremendously as well as expand the capabilities of the ball club. In addition to the ball club, we have popular county parks within our township that offer hiking, biking, and skiing trails, nature preserves, and water recreation. None of these areas are served with broadband, as they all fall within the unserved and underserved areas.

Education

Our township includes three different school districts, a charter school and a private school. The vast majority of our students had an extremely difficult time during Covid, and after, with the exception of those who are fortunate to live in the first two miles out of the City limits and have access to Charter/Spectrum. Hot spots and expensive capped services are not good enough for our children's education. The Wildlands Charter School is part of a fourth school district and is housed at Beaver Creek Reserve, a non-profit reserve in our township. These 60 students, grades 7-12, rely on the internet to supplement their hands-on education outside of the classroom.

Jessica Janssen, Chair 715.577.3840; Sheila Running, Supervisor 715.832.9686; Ken Schick, Supervisor 715.832.0017

Economic Development

The greater Eau Claire community is in a severe housing crisis. Home development is not keeping up with our population growth and developers are looking at rural areas for large developments. In two neighboring townships, we've seen approvals for 158 new homes in the past three months. The Town of Seymour has lots of suitable undeveloped land for new residential homes, but no one is interested in us because we cannot provide what most now consider the "basic" necessity of reliable, stable internet. With new homes valuing close to \$350,000 each in our community, this is a significant piece of the puzzle that our town needs to have in order to grow and be viable into the future.

Broadband Ready

Our Town became Telecommuter Forward! certified in June, 2019 as a first step in preparing ourselves for future broadband efforts. Shortly after the ARPA funds were announced, our town board created a broadband committee made up of myself and six other town residents. We've gathered numerous testimonials from residents and encouraged them to take the Eau Claire County broadband survey, which included a speed test to properly map out the reality of internet speeds in our township. We also heard proposals from both Charter/Spectrum and Bloomer Telephone Company and made a recommendation to the town board to move forward with Bloomer Telephone Company after carefully weighing our options.

Bloomer Telephone Company

Anyone in this area who is familiar with Bloomer Telephone Company knows they stand by their word and they are a top notch company in everything from their customer service to their ability to provide the speeds, prices, and reliability that today's world demands. We are a rural community and Bloomer Telephone serves rural communities like us. Bloomer Telephone's proposal is to get our entire township covered with broadband within the next two years. We understand that parts of the proposed area are covered by RDOF, but those areas may have to wait up to six years before it is available, and, quite frankly, that is not acceptable to us. Bloomer's reputation and past history has proven multiple times that, once awarded the job, they can deliver what they promise, often in less time than required. This could mean that our town could have broadband available to our entire township, all 452 currently unserved homes, as soon as the end of next year.

Resident Concerns

We've heard from dozens of residents who are desperate for better internet service. Some use hot spots off their cell phones, some use multiple jet packs, some use satellite and others rely on capped DSL that is neither reliable nor cost effective. It's keeping kids from proper education and nurse practitioners from viewing x rays and helping patients on off days. It's causing tension between employees and their employers whose zoom/webx/video conferencing expectations cannot be met or causing them to run back to the office because work cannot be done from home. And, the most difficult email I read was about a young family who cannot video chat with their deployed dad without loading up the kids in the car and driving down the street for cell service. We absolutely can do better than this.

My own family has struggled, as we live in an unserved area, just blocks from where Charter/Spectrum ends. Six years ago, we were told we "weren't worth it" to have Charter expand

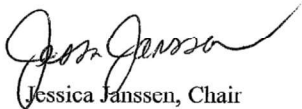
to the one mile block that we are a part of. We asked again when we were all sent home in March, 2020. I had three kids in school and was an Operations Manager for a financial institution. I used up my entire data cap on the first day I was home! After that, we paid over \$250/month for a larger amount of data (still capped) and I could rarely use my webcam or it would lock up and kick me off. My department handled multi-million dollar trades in the stock market—needless to say, I was quickly relieved of any trading duties because there was no way I could do my job without fear of causing irreparable damage to our firm. My son finished out his senior year online by using our phone hotspot, which also was expensive to maintain. My story is a common theme throughout my township.

We Are Prepared

Our town is prepared and ready to move forward with Bloomer Telephone Company, but only with the help of grant funding. We have contributed \$325,000, which is 93% of our ARPA funds, and nearly the amount of our annual budget that funds our township. We have made arrangements to streamline our permitting process, delay, and rearrange upcoming road projects, and are working closely with Eau Claire County's broadband committee to ensure we can get started as soon as possible. Without this grant, though, we simply do not have the funds to move this forward.

We respectfully request that you consider our grant application for approval. On behalf of the Town of Seymour Board and our residents, we thank you for your time and effort as you consider all the grant applications. We know we are not alone in our need, and we appreciate the thankless work you put into these difficult decisions.

Sincerely,



Jessica Janssen, Chair
Town of Seymour
seymourchair@gmail.com
715-577-3840.



SCHOOL DISTRICT of FALL CREEK

336 E. Hoover Ave. • Fall Creek, WI 54742 • (715) 877-2123

March 2, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Coker,

The Fall Creek School District is submitting this letter of support for broadband internet expansion in the Town of Seymour area. Our school district has families that live in this area who really struggle with internet access.

The pandemic certainly has amplified the need for increased broadband in this region. It was simple to determine that our communities broadband networks were not sufficient because the virtual connections didn't work. Various data points were gathered, from trips to students' homes, multiple vendor mobile broadband devices, and geographical limitations. In addition, third-party data was gathered from the Wisconsin Broadband Public Service Commission. It is clear that in our district we do not have adequate broadband internet for all of our families and students.

Fall Creek School District has been a 1:1 technology district for years. We support virtual platforms, for all curriculum, in grades K-12. Every student utilizes Chromebooks and Ipads. A minimum of 10 Mbps is needed for each student in a home. Currently, over 80% of our district is at 3 Mbps or less per household, not per student.

If I can be of further assistance, please feel free to contact me.

Sincerely,

John Goodman
Director of Technology
Middle School Principal



**Marshfield Clinic
Health System**

Marshfield Medical Center
1000 North Oak Avenue
Marshfield, WI 54449

March 10, 2022

Ms. Kristy Nieto, Division Administrator
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53707-9100

Re: Letter of Support/Commitment for the Town of Seymour Broadband Expansion Grant proposal

Marshfield Clinic is an integrated health system located in Marshfield, WI serving central, north-central and north-western Wisconsin, this includes patients who reside in Eau Claire County. We are a Mission, Vision and Value's driven organization that strives to "Enrich the Lives of those we serve". MCHS has used Telehealth to reach unserved and underserved populations throughout Wisconsin since 1997.

MCHS is supportive of the efforts of this proposed project by the Town of Seymour and offer this letter of support and commitment for their grant application. Further, Marshfield Clinic Health System will contribute \$10,000 to the Town of Seymour toward this project if it is awarded grant funds by the Public Service Commission. This project will expand internet access to about 471 new homes.

Over the course of the last 6 years, MCHS has worked closely with the communities we serve in an effort to help them prepare for a time in which more healthcare can be delivered using technology directly into the patient's home. The COVID-19 Pandemic accelerated the move to delivering care via telehealth much more quickly than expected. However, Telehealth was able to respond quickly and offer continued access to healthcare services by our patients throughout the Pandemic. Since March of 2020, MCHS has completed over 400,000 telehealth encounters that were not permissible prior to the Pandemic. Despite the rapid advancement of Telehealth, access to broadband internet services continue to be our patient's top barrier in accessing these services.

Looking forward to a Post-COVID world, Telehealth is not going away. Federal legislation is expected to make these new flexibilities to use telehealth permanent. Telehealth visits allow patients better access to healthcare without the need to travel or miss work or school. This allows patients to more conveniently maintain their chronic illness appointments, have a visit with their Primary Care Doctor or complete needed follow-up care. A number of new services are likely to join the array of telehealth services already offered by health systems across the country. A patient's access to broadband at home will be a determining factor in which services they can consume and which they cannot. MCHS will be at the forefront of offering these new care modalities.

Collaborative efforts are needed to expand broadband across Wisconsin and MCHS is proud to support this Broadband expansion project and we urge the Public Service Commission to fund this project.

Sincerely,

Susan Turney MD, MS, FACP, FACMPE
CEO

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission
North Tower, 6th Floor
Hill Farms State Office Building
4822 Madison Yards Way
Madison, WI 53705

Dear Ms. Coker

I am submitting this letter of support for the broadband internet expansion in the Town of Seymour area. I am a Family Nurse Practitioner for Marshfield Clinic working 12 hour shifts. On my days off, I am using my work computer at home to take care of my patients. Multiple times a day, I am reviewing Lab/X-ray results, communicating with my nursing team, and writing prescriptions. Therefore, I provide care to my patients when I am not in the office. Being able to do this from home makes a significant positive impact on the health of my patients.

In the past, I had Satellite Internet. Unfortunately, that did not allow me the ability to use my work computer from home. Thus, I would have to go into work on my days off or my patient's healthcare would be delayed until I returned to work.

My current internet set up is considered LTE Broadband through Goodland Communications. It runs off the AT&T network. It cost me over 500 dollars to get it installed. I currently pay \$147.70 a month for a fixed amount of data. I was lucky to get in at 800 GB, but their current customers only get 400 GB for cost. The speeds are decent, but inconsistent. I can get downloads between 15-40 mpbs. My video is spottier and can range from 240p up to 2160p. When it drops to 240p that makes any video conferencing problematic. Often when I use my work computer, even with these speeds, my system runs slow or crashes.

Importantly, while I get decent speeds, the cost is not something everyone in my area can afford. I am blessed that I can. However, I had to make it a priority for the sake of my patient care.

Thank you for your consideration to help provide broadband internet to the Seymour Area. Please feel free to contact me with any additional questions.

Sincerely,

Jacey Graser, NP
Marshfield Clinic
715-828-0921



**Eau Claire County
BROADBAND COMMITTEE**
Eau Claire County Courthouse - Room 3344
721 Oxford Avenue
Eau Claire, Wisconsin 54703-5212
(715) 839-4741

March 4, 2022

Steffany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower- 6th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

RE: Bloomer Telephone Company - Wisconsin Public Service Commission Broadband Expansion Grant Application – Town of Seymour

Dear Ms. Powell Coker:

The Eau Claire County Broadband Committee strongly supports the proposed Bloomer Telephone Company project that will provide fiber to the premises of 458 locations that are unserved/underserved in the Eau Claire County Town of Seymour. With this project, residents and businesses in the Town of Seymour will have access to high-speed broadband internet service. The proposed project is a public-private partnership between Bloomer Telephone Company and the Town of Seymour. The Town of Seymour is committing \$325,000 of its American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds to this project and Eau Claire County will match that amount if their grant application is approved.

In our digital age, inadequate broadband infrastructure disproportionately affects small, rural communities. Poor broadband infrastructure limits the ability of residents to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities, to work remotely, and to access telehealth options. Poor broadband infrastructure puts rural communities at a competitive disadvantage and is a major roadblock to economic development compared to communities with high-speed broadband services. Local businesses are losing opportunities because of poor Internet connections. The fact of the matter is, that in our connected economy, access to a high-speed broadband Internet connection is an absolute necessity.

Eau Claire County is committed to expanding broadband infrastructure throughout the County. In 2019, the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee was formed. Made up of eleven members with varied broadband expertise and backgrounds, they have been working to build strong relationships with Internet Service Providers (ISPs), Townships, and other partners to expand broadband access, especially in rural areas. What follows are some of the Committee's accomplishments toward that goal:

- Advocate for the expansion of broadband infrastructure access to residences and businesses
- Strong supporter of the town and internet service provider partnerships
- Recipient of the PSC Broadband Forward Community designation
- Supported towns to be designated as Broadband Telecommuter Communities
- Developed an online broadband survey with a speed test to collect more accurate data for use in grant applications
- Committed to provide a financial match for successful PSC Broadband Expansion Grant applications
- Partnered with UW-Eau Claire to develop a Digital Navigator program
- Partnering with United Way of the Greater Chippewa Valley to develop a Digital Equity & Inclusion program
 - NOTE: These last two would be available to Town of Seymour residents and businesses to increase adoption and improve technical skills.

As the Chair of the Eau Claire County Broadband Committee, I urge you to approve the grant proposal to expand broadband access in the Town of Seymour. Enhanced broadband services will give residents the ability to stay connected, enable them to take advantage of virtual learning opportunities, enable them to work remotely, and enable them to access telehealth options. It will also give businesses the ability to take advantage of economic development opportunities they cannot take advantage of now.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Donald Mowry, Chair
Eau Claire County Broadband Committee

County Board

Minutes
Regular Meeting

Chippewa County Courthouse, Rm 302

March 8, 2022
6:00 PM

County Board - Special Meeting - Feb 24, 2022 6:00 PM

2. AZO: 02 - 22 : Rezone Petition: 2022-0001 - Eagle Point
3. 6865 : County Administrator Appointment - Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC)

7. REPORTS

A. County Administrator Review and Update

B. Department Reports

1. 2021 Annual Jail Inspection - Curt Dutton
Sheriff Kowalczyk and Jail Captain Curt Dutton presented information on the annual jail inspection. This is the 4th year in a row that the Chippewa County Jail received zero violations.
2. Recognition of County Board Supervisors 2020 - 2022 - Jaclyn Sadler
County Clerk, Jaclyn Sadler, presented the County Board Supervisors with a certificate of service and thanked the supervisors for their service the last two years.

C. General Reports

8. BUSINESS ITEMS


1. Res. 06 - 22 : Resolution to Provide ARPA Broadband Funds for Bloomer Telephone PSC Application - Randy Scholz
County Administrator Scholz clarified the fiscal statement for the board. The fiscal statement does NOT show/include \$650,000 the project is receiving from the Town of Seymour and Eau Claire County. The total cost of the project does include the amount.

Kent and Travis from Bloomer Telephone answered questions from the Board

RESULT:	APPROVED [10 TO 4]
MOVER:	James Mickelson, District 8
SECONDER:	Ken Schmitt, District 3
AYES:	Gullickson, Schmitt, McMenamin, Hauser, Mickelson, Shipman, Eisenhuth, Ives, Hunt, McGill
NAYS:	Sikorski, Steele, Ericksen, Kervina
EXCUSED:	Hull

2. Res. 07 - 22 : Resolution to Provide ARPA Broadband Funds for Ntera PSC Application - Randy Scholz
County Administrator Scholz spoke on the resolution.

Eau Claire Energy Cooperative

Your Touchstone Energy® Partner 

March 14, 2022

Lynn Thompson, President and CEO
Eau Claire Energy Cooperative
8214 U.S. Hwy 12
Fall Creek WI 54742

Stephany Powell Coker
Secretary to the Commission
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower – 6th Floor
Madison, WI 53705-9100

Re: Letter of support for Bloomer Telephone Company grant application – Towns of Hallie and Seymour

Ms. Coker:

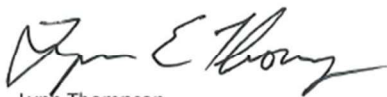
Eau Claire Energy Cooperative (ECEC) provides this letter of support for the Towns of Hallie and Seymour Broadband grant application. We are willing to commit \$2,500 toward this initiative as Aid to Construction.

There are two reasons that ECEC is enthusiastically supporting this grant application and contributing money toward the construction.

1. We have an electrical substation in the area being proposed. Strategically having fiber to our substations will provide reliable high-speed connectivity that will enable us to make our distribution grid smarter. Deploying smart grid technology will result in higher reliability for our members, a safer operating environment for our employees, shorter power restoration times, and reduced operating costs.
2. Our underserved members in this area deserve access to the same if not better connectivity that their urban neighbors enjoy. As a small locally owned company, we have high confidence in Bloomer Telephone delivering excellent service to the residents in these townships.

Please feel free to contact me if you require any additional information.

Sincerely,



Lynn Thompson
President/CEO



March 2, 2022

Jessica Janssen, Chair - Town of Seymour
6500 Tower Drive
Eau Claire, WI 54703

Dear Jessica Janssen:

The Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) is in support of the Town of Seymour's grant application through the Public Service Commission. This grant application supports the Chippewa Valley Technical College's mission:

CVTC delivers innovative, applied, and flexible education that supports a diverse community of learners, improves the lives of students, and adds value to our communities.

Faster and more reliable broadband for CVTC District residents will provide more opportunities for CVTC stakeholders to enroll in the desired educational opportunities available from CVTC. These opportunities include the CVTC Learning Management Systems, On-line courses, Hybrid courses, Business and Industry training and course work for High School students. In order for CVTC to be able to deliver programming to district residents, fast and reliable broadband is necessary.

CVTC supports the Public Service Commission grant application through the cooperative efforts and funding of the Town of Seymour, Eau Claire County, and the Bloomer Telephone Company. This grant will in turn provide opportunities for residents and businesses within the CVTC District. CVTC supports this grant application and hopes that the grant request that is being brought forward by the Town of Seymour is approved.

If you have any questions, please feel free to reach out to Thomas Lange, Chief Information Officer of CVTC at 715-831-7285.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'Thomas J. Lange'.

Thomas Lange
Vice President of Information Technology and Chief Information Officer
Chippewa Valley Technical College
Tlange8@cvtc.edu
715-831-7285

Eau Claire Campuses

Clairemont
West
Gateway

620 W. Clairemont Ave.
Eau Claire, WI 54701-6162
715-833-6200
Fax 715-833-6470
www.cvtc.edu

**An affirmative action
employer and educational
institution.**

**Bruce A. Barker
President**



Commissioner Ellen Nowak
Public Service Commission of Wisconsin
4822 Madison Yards Way
North Tower - 6th Floor
Madison, Wisconsin 53705-9100

March 8, 2022

RE: Support For Towns of Colfax/Elk Mound Grant

Dear Ms. Nowak,

On behalf of the Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation, I am writing in support of Bloomer Telephone Company's grant applications to expand broadband within the Towns of Colfax, Tilden, Eagle Point, Lafayette, Hallie, and Seymour. These projects will add approximately 225 miles of broadband fiber to underserved areas of Chippewa County.

As you know, there is a positive relationship between broadband expansion and economic growth, especially in areas with lower population densities. The residents of rural Chippewa County work for varying areas of business, including agriculture, information, finance, and health insurance companies, and would benefit greatly from this broadband access development.

In addition to the workforce, students in public schools will also greatly benefit from having access to fast and reliable broadband connections. It is crucial for a community to invest in their future workforce, which comprises of public and private schools at all levels. Broadband Internet access allows students to conduct research outside their library, take part in online learning programs across the country, and expand their learning beyond the classroom.

Additionally, many modern businesses and industries rely on broadband in order to successfully operate. The absence of strong broadband connection encourages talent that is being produced from Chippewa Valley Technical College (CVTC) and UW-Stout to find work and start businesses elsewhere. The expansion of broadband to rural areas will ensure that Wisconsin does not fall behind in economic and technology development, and that the area stays just as successful as an urban or suburban area.

I urge that the Public Service Commission (PSC) approve the Broadband Expansion Grant applications submitted by Bloomer Telephone Company, and look forward to answering your questions about our support for this project.

Sincerely,

Charlie Walker
President/CEO
Chippewa County Economic Development Corporation



ASHLEY CONSTRUCTION, LLC.

P: 715.271.6504

E: ADAM@ASHLEYCONSTRUCTION.CO

A: 17995 120TH AVE. CHIPPEWA FALLS, WI 54729

Date: 03/11/2022

To whom it may concern:

We are a home building and real estate property development company. We have heard from dozens of potential buyers/build customers over the last two years that they will not live in any area without high speed broadband internet. This has been economically detrimental to many in Hallie, Lafayette, and Seymour. We want to expand our RiverBelle development in Lafayette, but the lack of a reliable ISP is holding us back. We have another development in Lafayette that has this service and we've sold 95 of 99 lots in less than three years. The feedback that we've received is that high speed internet played a big part in this.

Thank you!

Sincerely,

Adam Ashley



CHIPPEWA FALLS
AREA UNIFIED SCHOOL DISTRICT

District Office
1130 Miles Street
Chippewa Falls, WI 54729-1998
Ph: 715-726-2417
Fax: 715-726-2781
Http://cfsd.chippfalls.k12.wi.us

March 4, 2022

Scott Marty
Director of
Educational Technology &
District Assessment
Coordinator

To Whom It May Concern:

Please accept this letter on behalf of the Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District in support of the Town of Seymour's grant application for broadband expansion, which would directly benefit students who attend our district as well as their families.

Reliable high-speed internet is a critical component of continued growth and future success for our school district and the Chippewa Falls community. We are uniquely structured to not only educate our City of Chippewa Falls students, but also several municipalities. These municipalities do not have consistent, reliable high speed internet in all areas, which sets students and families at an informational disadvantage.

We are working with the Department of Public Instruction (DPI) to achieve adequate access for all kids in order to decrease the "Homework Gap" caused by limited access to technology and high speed internet. The CFAUSD has worked to close the gap by providing a computing device to students in grades 3-12 for school work. We also provide LTE hot spots to students without adequate coverage; however, we are not able to keep up with the demands of the students' needs and the needs of families.

The CFAUSD continues to build opportunities for students to leverage technology for learning to help prepare them for a 21st Century workforce, in jobs that may not have even been invented yet.

Access to affordable, high speed internet is pivotal to being part of this 21st Century world. Thank you for considering the needs of our students and families as we write in support of broadband expansion in the Town of Seymour. Please do not hesitate to contact me for additional information about the importance of broadband expansion for the children in our schools and their families.

Sincerely,

Scott Marty
Director of Educational Technology
Chippewa Falls Area Unified School District

Appendix II – Itemized Budget and Construction Costs

Budget Detail		
Description / Category		
	Detail	Total
Contractual, Consultant Fees		\$ 4,822,231
*Buried fiber network of 112miles of 12 to 288 fiber strand cable, including splicing, pedestals, handholes and equipment & engineering costs		
Equipment-detail below		\$ 370,638
*Equipment shelter, cabinets, vaults, power, splitters, fiber panels	\$ 215,588	
*XGS-PON shelf, blade, sfps	\$ 83,202	
*ONT'S	\$ 69,453	
Labor (Salary, Fringe)		\$ 79,079
Total:		\$ 5,271,948

Appendix III – Broadband Availability in the Proposed Project Area

Street Address	City	State	Zip Code	ISPs Listed on PSC Broadband Map	ISPs Providing Service	Qualified as "Underserved"
2409 N 50th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes
4918 Burnell Drive	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes
5095 Burnell Drive	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes
2269 St Francis Drive W	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes

5157 Burnell Drive	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes
2256 St Francis Drive E	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes
2505 N 50th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum Astrea United States Cellular	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes
2605 N 50th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum Astrea United States Cellular	Charter/ Spectrum	Yes
2814 N 54th Avenue	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum Astrea United States Cellular	None	Yes
2815 N 54th Avenue	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum Astrea United States Cellular	None	Yes
2801 N 54th Avenue	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum Astrea United States Cellular	None	Yes
2508 N 54th Avenue	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum Astrea United States Cellular	None	Yes
2440 N 54th Avenue	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum Astrea United States Cellular	None	Yes

2652 N 60th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes
2880 N 60th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes
3140 N 60th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes
3200 N 60th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes
3290 N 60th Avenue	Chippewa Falls	WI	54729	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes
2233 Co Road QS	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes
6610 Burnell Drive	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink; T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes
6707 Burnell Drive	Eau Claire	WI	54703	CenturyLink; T-Mobile Fixed Wireless T-Mobile/Sprint/Verizon/AT&T Charter/Spectrum	None	Yes

Appendix IV – Speed Test Data – Selected Responses

- We currently use satellite service. There isn't much to choose from as far as providers selling only internet service without the DISH or DIRECT TV packages. We are only interested in internet service.
- Slow, unreliable, and expensive
- We cannot stream any content and always use up our 25 GB of satellite internet within 15 days while we are really trying to be careful about data usage. We have no idea and no way to find out what we are doing that uses our data. It is very frustrating and really puts us at a disadvantage.
- no internet options available at my address. there is a fiber line that runs past my address, but according to internet providers there are no access nodes in this neighborhood. also no DSL per internet providers. only cell service available is Verizon with the use of a signal booster. other cell phone carriers drop out about 2 miles from this address. Viasat quoted me \$185 per month for the lowest tier option, said since I had no other internet options they were going to charge me full price, no discounts or special offers because of no competition/options available for me.
- there is no broadband internet available at my address. i only have occasional internet from my cell phone. there is a fiber wire at the street level, but CenturyLink tells me i am not close enough to the node to connect to it.

- My boyfriend lives at 1739 S 72nd Ave, I have wanted to move in with him but because I work from home and there is no great internet for my work, I have to stay where I am. This is something that is needed and has been for a long time. Thank you for your time!
- We use satellite service and it is crazy expensive and horrible when multiple people are using the service.
- GET US BROADBAND!!
- Our only option is cellular data service or satellite. I can't connect to work VPN and my kids cannot complete homework because of connect issues and download speeds. Our house is 5 miles from a major Wisconsin city - this is not acceptable.
- Run the fiber already. It's 2020, a solution is 10 years too old.
- We have no option for broadband or DSL. We have no internet options.
- We are so frustrated with this. We are about 7 miles from Eau Claire and our only option is satellite or Cell Phone. We get 2 bars on our AT & T phones which is not enough for good internet either. AT & T refuses to run fiber optic cables so I am very frustrated with them. Hughesnet is our Satellite internet but they say the satellite is not aligned properly but want \$125 to come out and then want to charge more to actually work on it. Now we are being forced to work from home and what are we to do? At this point I would never tell anyone to move out here unless you are okay with no internet
- We're paying over \$90.00/mo for this worthless satellite internet and that's all we can get out this way. We're only 7 minutes from 53/North Crossing. Anyone with Verizon phone service can't get any reception at our house. I could have been working full time from home for over a year, but can't because we can't get decent internet service. Now I'm forced to go home because of Covid-19, and will likely have to draw unemployment because our internet won't be compatible to work from home. People have moved from our neighborhood because of the internet.
- this is too slow to work from home! Nothing else available!
- It's not acceptable to be 7 miles from Eau Claire limits and have such poor internet
- This is not acceptable, can't function at this speed
- Too slow to do ANYTHING!!!!
- Too slow to work from home
- Too slow to even work from home!! Switched from Satellite to a hot spot and it's still too slow
- This is crazy. People who live further from town have better internet options.
- This doesn't meet requirements to work from home
- The test is unable to bring up the final graph screen so I am taking the numbers at the hesitation when it stops to switch to download speed, and at the end when it freezes since the graph itself won't show up.
- The test takes at least 5+ tries to get the actual results. There are no other options of internet aside from satellite. None of the carriers plan to come out further without being legally forced. No one can work from home without it severely hindering or making work impossible. Others move out to our road and leave a few years later with internet being their core reason. "
- It took 5 tries to get this test to work because our internet is so poor. We pay at minimum \$90 per month for internet that doesn't always work and is incredibly slow and unreliable. There are NO other options aside from satellite service and no providers have any intent on expanding their current service until forced to do so.
- We're paying nearly triple what other people pay for in-town or coax cable internet. If we were to be bumped to the current advertised prices for our current service, it's \$150 per month for service that barely functions. In Fall Creek, they have Astrea coax, and for \$41.95 they get 50mps. We've been here over 10 years and not one company has any interest in coming out, there needs to be something done or this will never change. We've requested numerous companies (AT&T, Charter, Comcast/Xfinity, etc) to consider coming out here since we receive endless spam-mail from them on a DAILY basis, telling us they service our area when they in fact DO NOT. Either they should be penalized for false advertising or they need to hold true and spend the money to bring the coax or fiber out here. The county needs to hold them accountable. Something needs to change. Due to the current healthcare crisis, two members of our house cannot work in Eau Claire now, but are 'essential' to their companies.

- We do not have an ISP, we use Verizon wireless and a hotspot from a cell phone with unlimited data. This is due to the lack of service at our home location. so currently broadband is not readily available from a reliable source (satellite and/or telephone provided service is not acceptable for our needs nor reliable enough) thank you for taking this on and helping more rural locations get connected.
- We solely use a hotspot from an wireless carrier for our internet at home. the only other options for us are DSL or Satellite, we're waiting for Starlink to expand so we can utilize that, but wired or fiber broadband is not an alternative at this time for us do to the location of our home and the distance to a road.
- I do not have any internet or WIFI service where I live
- We live so close to the City of Eau Claire and our internet providers are very limited and expensive. We have been waiting for broadband to arrive here for years.
- Very unstable & unpredictable
- Submitting a second test that is worse than the first!
- Download speed 2.25MB/s, upload 0.39 Mb/s. We pay \$80 per month for this level of "service"!
- This internet service is the only "physical" connection we can get. Neighbors cannot even purchase the service supplied by AT&T as we are a "grandfathered" customer. Service is horrible at best, unworkable at worst.
- We currently use AT&T through DSL that is just like the dial up back in the day in 1995. I pay nearly \$60 for this service and have been on the waitlist for satellite internet for more than 6 months. My husband deployed to Kuwait last November which contributed to me changing my career path slightly to allow opportunity to work remotely. Due to the lack of reliable internet I am not able to have this option. Today it was nearly 20 below zero when I loaded up my 3 children under the age of two and brought them to daycare when I could have been able to keep them home with me and work from home. Another current issue is being able to talk to my husband. Due to the slow internet I am not able to connect to do facetime or skype with him and if I disconnect from my internet the phone service is also too poor to connect reliably to talk to him. We literally have to drive to have a conversation with him.
- I can only use one internet provider DSL through AT&T. I cant connect to VPN and with my husband deploying in a couple of months we have been on the wait list for star link. Life would be so much easier having reliable internet. Hopefully me and my children have enough coverage to chat via internet when he is in Kuwait.
- Our neighborhood tried to get charter to extend their service to us since it ends about a mile away. Nothing ever came of it. Hopefully this can get the ball rolling because it's frustrating having such poor internet so close to town.
- Spectrum was supposed to lay cable with ATT when we built our house, but did not show up. now they want about \$5000 to install the cable to our house.
- I have been using the hot spot on my phone. Stable internet service would be helpful in our home. I have an office at home and work from home 2-3 days a week. I have a lot of zoom meetings and have trouble with them. It says the connection is unstable.
- We use Jet packs from Verizon. In addition to my advertising job, my family owns a food truck. I use the internet from home (as this is my food trucks home base) for EVERYTHING in our business. To add to this already heavy internet use, my child is home-schooled using an online program. we have 2 ""jet packs"" from Verizon Wireless. The reason we have 2 Verizon jet packs is because they only offer ""high Speed"" for so many GB and then it slows down dramatically. They don't offer the option to buy more GB. My son can't make it though an entire month of schooling on one, so I had to buy 2 so he can get everything done. This is all VERY EXPENSIVE. I actually have 4 kids but only the one is homeschooling. I can't imagine what we would do if we chose to home-school the other children too."
- ATT, Charter, and Spectrum all call us and mail us offers to bundle wifi, home phone and cable. When contacting them NONE can provide all services. Excede and Hughes offer satellite wifi which is useless 80 days / year due to weather. Try calling 911 with no service!!!
- REALLY SLOOOOOOOOW. :(
- We are rural residence. Our only option is satellite internet which is slow and buggy. It now took me 15 minutes to watch a 3-minute video about oak wilt. We need broadband internet throughout all of Eau Claire County. It would be nice to catch up with the rest of the world.

- It's amazing that we only live 7 miles out from Eau Claire and 90 miles from the Twin Cities and we can't get fiber optic internet at my residence. Satellite internet is expensive, slow and unreliable! Having reliable internet is a need not a want in today's world.
- I do hope that Eau Claire County is taking steps to offer affordable and reliable internet to all residents regardless of their address or financial situation.
- We need broadband at our location for our child for school and to be able to keep my job
- We are not offered any internet service in our area at this time.
- I don't have access to very fast/reliable service and the service I do have doesn't work very well for my needs especially with working remotely for my job, it is slow and I cannot do what I need to for my job in the afternoon, I have to get up very, very early to be able to do my job and what I need to do without being frustrated and not fight with the internet.

Appendix V – Public-private Partnership Agreements



PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

By and between the Town of Hallie, Wisconsin, and Bloomer Telephone Company

THIS AGREEMENT is made this 8th day of March, 2022 by and among the Participating Parties (defined below) located in the State of Wisconsin (the "State") which, through their duly authorized representatives, have signed this agreement.

WHEREAS, the Town of Hallie, a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to help and provide resources and the support necessary for economic development for this project; and


WHEREAS, Bloomer Telephone Company, a Wisconsin corporation seeking to do business in the Township, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach un-served and underserved residences, businesses and farms in the Town of Hallie where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, it is currently expected that the proposed broadband expansion would be constructed in areas within Hallie Township, Chippewa County, Wisconsin and enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town of Hallie for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities; and

WHEREAS, to further support its application for the State broadband funding grant, Docket Number 5-BF-2022, the Bloomer Telephone Company has requested that the Town of Hallie enter into an agreement, referred to as a Public-Private Partnership Agreement, to assist in the Project by:

- **Providing Financial and in-kind assistance to the Project**, in the form Federal, State, County and Township provided funding through the American Rescue Plan Act Broadband Access Grant program, waiving all of the normal fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from the Town Board;
- **Grant permission on and across Township property**, to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliance with all existing rules and regulations;
- **Recognizing that the Project is a priority**, and is consistent with any internal planning documents adopted by the Hallie Town Board.

1120 15th Avenue
Bloomer, Wisconsin 54724

715-568-4830
Bloomer.net | 

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.

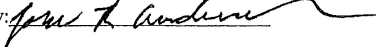


NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **Records.** The Town of Hallie will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement and will make those records available upon request.
2. **Reporting.** The Bloomer Telephone Company shall meet with the Hallie Town Board on a semi-annual basis for the purposes of presenting an oral report on the status of the Project. The date, time and place of such meeting shall be determined cooperatively among the parties. No fewer than seven (7) days prior to such meeting, the Bloomer Telephone Company shall provide a report regarding siting and construction progress with respect to the Project.
3. **Effective Date.** This agreement shall become effective upon its adoption and shall remain in full force and effect until terminated as provided herein.
4. **New Members.** After the effective date of this Agreement, additional municipalities may join in this Agreement.
5. **Termination.** This Agreement shall be deemed terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice requesting termination of this Agreement in whole or in part.
6. **Severability.** The terms of this Agreement are severable and any determination by any court or agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Agreement that results in the invalidity of any part shall not affect the remainder of the Agreement.
7. **Amendments.** The terms of this Agreement shall not be amended without the written authorization of the governing bodies of all the Participating Parties.
8. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
9. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

TOWN OF Hallie, COUNTY OF Chippewa, WI


A Participating Party

By: 

John Andersen – TOWN OF Hallie Clerk/Treasurer

Date: March 8th, 2022

1120 15th Avenue
Bloomer, Wisconsin 54724

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BLOOMER TELEPHONE COMPANY

A Participating Party

By: 

Kent Klima – VP & GM

Date: March 8th, 2022



PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

By and between the County of Chippewa, Wisconsin, and Bloomer Telephone Company

THIS AGREEMENT is made this 10th day of March, 2022 by and among the Participating Parties (defined below) located in the State of Wisconsin (the "State") which, through their duly authorized representatives, have signed this agreement.

WHEREAS, the County of Chippewa, a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to help and provide resources and the support necessary for economic development for this project; and

WHEREAS, Bloomer Telephone Company, a Wisconsin corporation doing business in the County, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach un-served and underserved residences, businesses and farms in the County of Chippewa where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, it is currently expected that the proposed broadband expansion would be constructed in areas within the County of Chippewa, State of Wisconsin and enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the County of Chippewa for desirable economic growth by addressing existing service disparities; and

WHEREAS, to further support its application for the State broadband funding grant, Docket Number 5-BF-2022, the Bloomer Telephone Company has requested that the County of Chippewa enter into an agreement, referred to as a Public-Private Partnership Agreement, to assist in the Project by:

- **Providing Financial assistance to the Project** in the form Federal and State provided funding through the American Rescue Plan Act Broadband Access Grant program;
- **Granting permission on and across County property upon request and when deemed by the County as appropriate** to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliance with all existing rules and regulations;
- **Recognizing that the Project is a priority** and is consistent with any internal planning documents adopted by the County of Chippewa.

1120 15th Avenue
Bloomer, Wisconsin 54724

715-568-4830
Bloomer.net | 

This institution is an equal opportunity provider and employer.



NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **Records.** The County of Chippewa will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement and will make those records available upon request.
2. **Reporting.** The Bloomer Telephone Company shall meet with the County Board on a semi-annual basis for the purposes of presenting an oral and written report on the status of the Project. The date, time and place of such meeting shall be determined cooperatively among the parties. No fewer than seven (7) days prior to such meeting, the Bloomer Telephone Company shall provide the written report to the County regarding siting and construction progress with respect to the Project.
3. **Effective Date.** This agreement shall become effective upon its adoption and shall remain in full force and effect until terminated as provided herein.
4. **New Members.** After the effective date of this Agreement, additional municipalities may join in this Agreement.
5. **Termination.** This Agreement shall be deemed terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice requesting termination of this Agreement in whole or in part.
6. **Severability.** The terms of this Agreement are severable and any determination by any court or agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Agreement that results in the invalidity of any part shall not affect the remainder of the Agreement.
7. **Amendments.** The terms of this Agreement shall not be amended without the written authorization of the governing bodies of all the Participating Parties.
8. **Governing Law.** This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
9. **Counterparts.** This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

COUNTY OF Chippewa, State of WI

A Participating Party

By: Dean Gullickson

Dean Gullickson – COUNTY of Chippewa Chairperson

Date: March 10, 2022

BLOOMER TELEPHONE COMPANY

A Participating Party

By: Kent Klima

Kent Klima – VP & GM

Date: March 10, 2022

1120 15th Avenue
Bloomer, Wisconsin 54724

715-568-4830
Bloomer.net |

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PUBLIC-PRIVATE PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

By and between the Town of Seymour, Wisconsin, and Bloomer Telephone Company

THIS AGREEMENT is made this 8th day of March, 2022 by and among the Participating Parties (defined below) located in the State of Wisconsin (the "State") which, through their duly authorized representatives, have signed this agreement.

WHEREAS, the Town of Seymour, a political subdivision of the State of Wisconsin, seeks to help and provide resources and the support necessary for economic development for this project; and

WHEREAS, Bloomer Telephone Company, a Wisconsin corporation seeking to do business in the Township, proposes to expand broadband capability to reach un-served and underserved residences, businesses and farms in the Town of Seymour where such service is currently unavailable or is prohibitively expensive; and

WHEREAS, it is currently expected that the proposed broadband expansion would be constructed in areas within Seymour Township, Eau Claire County, Wisconsin and enhanced broadband access and availability will be utilized to position the Town of Seymour for desirable economic growth through addressing existing service disparities; and

WHEREAS, to further support its application for the State broadband funding grant, Docket Number 5-BF-2022, the Bloomer Telephone Company has requested that the Town of Seymour enter into an agreement, referred to as a Public-Private Partnership Agreement, to assist in the Project by:

- **Providing Financial and in-kind assistance to the Project**, in the form Federal, State, County and Township provided funding through the American Rescue Plan Act Broadband Access Grant program, waiving all of the normal fees and expenses for obtaining permits or permissions required from the Town Board;
- **Grant permission on and across Township property**, to engage in activities to construct the Project in compliance with all existing rules and regulations;
- **Recognizing that the Project is a priority**, and is consistent with any internal planning documents adopted by the Seymour Town Board.

1120 15th Avenue
Bloomer, Wisconsin 54724

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NOW THEREFORE, it is hereby agreed by and among the Parties as follows:

1. **Records**, The Town of Seymour will maintain and be the custodian of all records associated with the administering and performance of this Agreement and will make those records available upon request.
2. **Reporting**, The Bloomer Telephone Company shall meet with the Seymour Town Board on a semi-annual basis for the purposes of presenting an oral report on the status of the Project. The date, time and place of such meeting shall be determined cooperatively among the parties. No fewer than seven (7) days prior to such meeting, the Bloomer Telephone Company shall provide a report regarding siting and construction progress with respect to the Project.
3. **Effective Date**, This agreement shall become effective upon its adoption and shall remain in full force and effect until terminated as provided herein.
4. **New Members**, After the effective date of this Agreement, additional municipalities may join in this Agreement.
5. **Termination**, This Agreement shall be deemed terminated by any party upon thirty (30) days written notice requesting termination of this Agreement in whole or in part.
6. **Severability**, The terms of this Agreement are severable and any determination by any court or agency having jurisdiction over the subject matter of the Agreement that results in the invalidity of any part shall not affect the remainder of the Agreement.
7. **Amendments**, The terms of this Agreement shall not be amended without the written authorization of the governing bodies of all the Participating Parties.
8. **Governing Law**, This Agreement shall be governed by the laws of the State of Wisconsin.
9. **Counterparts**, This Agreement may be executed in two or more counterparts, each of which shall be deemed an original, but all of which together shall constitute one and the same instrument.

TOWN OF Seymour, COUNTY OF Eau Claire, WI

A Participating Party

By: 

Jessica Janssen – TOWN OF Seymour Chairperson

Date: March 8th, 2022

BLOOMER TELEPHONE COMPANY

A Participating Party

By: 

Kent Klima – VP & GM

Date: March 8th, 2022

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